

DC SNOW FACTS AND STATS

STATS

Average amount of annual snowfall in DC	15 inches
Snowfall in 2000-2001 snow season	8 inches
Snowfall in 2001-2000	>3 inches
Snowfall in 2002-2003	40.3
Miles of District Streets	1,100
Number of Snow Emergency Routes	110
Miles of Interstate highways w/in city limits	75
Number of snow plow routes (Full plowing mobilization)	140
Number of bridges including railroad, pedestrian foot bridges	315
Snow Budget for FY2000-2001	\$3.2 million
Snow Budget for FY2001-2002	\$3.2 million
Snow Budget for FY2002-2003	\$3.2 million
Average cost of snow operation (full deployment):	+/- \$110,000 per shift

Snow Fact: A plowing operation uses three times more resources than a salting operation. It takes only one truck to salt each route, but it takes three trucks to plow a route.

PERSONNEL

Number of employees on duty/fully mobilized to spread salt:	+/- 230 per shift
Number of employees on duty/fully mobilized to plow:	+/- 350 per shift

Types of employees on snow duty or standby:

- Light/heavy plow drivers,
- IT Support and Communications staff,
- Fleet vehicle maintenance,
- Call Center operators, Salt Monitors,
- Command Center staff,
- Quality Assurance field teams,
- Tow Crane Operators,
- Program and Budget Analysts

VEHICLES AND MATERIALS

Approx pieces of snow equipment:	436
Number of heavy dump trucks fitted w/plows:	114
Number of light plows:	65

Snow Fact: DC snow vehicles are multifunctional. Each is able to plow, spray de-icer and spread salt.

Number of salt domes:	4
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Brentwood Rd. and W St., NE;• 1800 Potomac Ave., SE;• 3890 Fort Dr., NW;• 401 Farragut St., NE	

Capacity of salt domes:

5-15 tons (?) each

Liquid Deicer – carried in “saddlebags” aboard each truck.

Sand – Used **sparingly** to avoid harming water treatment facilities.

SNOW EMERGENCY ROUTES/NOTIFICATION

Snow Emergency Routes are posted with red and white signs (approximately two per block-face). Motorists are responsible for observing signage and determining whether a street is a Snow Emergency Route.

- A pending Snow Emergency is announced by the director of operations at least one hour before it is put into effect – generally the announcement is made no later than 11 pm and no earlier than 6 am.
- Most often, the announcement is made several hours in advance and broadcast via radio and television.
- Residents are strongly advised to monitor local media outlets for rapidly changing conditions and updates.
- Parked or disabled vehicles left on Snow Emergency Routes will be ticketed (\$250) and relocated to nearby streets.
- Motorists should call **(202) 727-5000** to locate vehicles towed during a Snow Emergency.

WEATHER TERMS FROM THE NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE

WATCH

A forecast issued **in advance** of a severe weather event to alert the public of the possibility of a particular hazard, such as ice storms, heavy snows, tornadoes, severe thunderstorms, and flash floods.

ADVISORY

Cautionary statements issued by the National Weather Service to signify probable weather conditions leading to situations of possible hazard. Examples include Snow Advisories stating possible slick streets, or Fog Advisories warning motorists of limited visibility.

WARNING

A forecast issued when severe weather has developed or **is already occurring**. Warnings specify a particular hazard or imminent danger, such as winter storms, heavy snows, tornadoes, flash floods, etc.



FAQs and Messages

Timely snow removal is one of the primary yardsticks by which residents measure the effectiveness of city service delivery. Even though the District historically receives light/moderate snow (approx. 12 – 15 inches annually), the snow and ice removal function requires a significant number of budget dollars and personnel hours in order to maintain readiness.

The message is that we're ready for whatever Mother Nature sends our way. We are committed to faster completion of plowing and salting along major roads and residential streets, which in turn means more rapid return of normal traffic flow and earlier resumption of delayed or suspended services.

To help our residents understand how the city's snow plan works, we have developed a public information brochure outlining the District's Snow Team response to a range of snow scenarios ranging from a light dusting to a full-blown blizzard. To view the Snow brochure [click here](#).

Clearing snow and ice from 1100 miles of city streets is not a predictable or instantaneous undertaking. In the event that a significant snowstorm does hit the District, we advise common sense. Use public transportation, clear the sidewalks adjacent to your property and most of all - be patient and allow sufficient time for snow operations to be implemented.

I used to live in Pittsburgh and they never had any problem clearing snow. Why does the District have so much trouble?

Heavy snow cities generally have more resources earmarked for snow removal, and often have a full-time Coordinator for snow-related operations. A city like Pittsburgh can receive 45 or more inches of snow per year, making plowing, etc., one of the city's core businesses.

Who is responsible for clearing sidewalks?

District law requires property owners to clear snow and ice from sidewalks, handicap ramps and steps abutting their property within the first 8 daylight hours after snow, sleet or ice stop falling. (DC Code, 2001 Ed, § 9-601.) This applies to all property owners – residential, commercial, federal, and municipal. If ice cannot be cleared without damaging the sidewalk, then property owners may spread sand or salt to make the sidewalks safe. (DC Code, 2001 Ed, § 9-604.) Property owners must also clear snow from the ADA-curb cuts. These are part of the sidewalk. Property owners are also asked to clear snow from catch basins and storm drains to prevent flooding during snow melt.

Do other cities require property owners to do this?

Yes

Is there a fine for not clearing the sidewalk?

According to the municipal Code, if property owners fail to comply, the District is required to clear their sidewalks (DC Code, 2001 Ed., § 9-605) and sue the property owners for the cost of clearing the snow or ice plus a \$25 fine (DC Code, 2001 Ed., § 9-606).

Why has the District never plowed my alley?

The District government does not have the resources to plow alleys. If necessary, alley trash collection will be suspended and moved to curbside.

Why does the snowplow keep blocking my driveway?

The priority during a major snow event is keeping traffic lanes clear for law enforcement, emergency, fire and rescue vehicles. Plows are designed to scrape ice and snow from the pavement and to push it to the right side and out of the traffic lane. The plow operators do not have control over the line of snow coming off the edge of the blade, and fixed-angle plows cannot be adjusted for the sharp turns required to clear driveways. To minimize the frustrating problem of the snowplow covering your driveway with snow after you've just shoveled it, stand facing the street and shovel snow into the yard or tree box instead of into the street.

Does Metro clear bus stops?

WMATA clears ice and snow from the entrances of the MetroRail stations only. WMATA does not clear around bus stops.

Who do I contact in the event of a utility or public service emergency ?

In the event of a public utility emergency please contact the following numbers:

WASA – Water and Sewer Authority Hotline

612-3400

PEPCO – Electric Company

Verizon – Telephone Company

WMATA – Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority

Washington Gas -

TEN THINGS TO DO NOW TO MAKE YOUR LIFE EASIER THIS WINTER

1. **Download and print a copy of the DC Family Preparedness Guide found at www.dccema.dc.gov**
2. Buy or replace snow shovel, if necessary.
3. Keep vehicles fueled to at least ½ tank.
4. Buy new windshield wiper blades, winterize your car and tires.
5. Put 10-pound bag of cat litter, ice scraper, and emergency supplies in the trunk.
6. Keep mobile telephones fully charged. Invest in a car charger (most are very inexpensive).
7. Stock up on batteries for flashlights, radios, battery-powered computer games, toys, lamps and lanterns.
8. Identify alternate parking space(s), either on or off-street, particularly if your street is a Snow Emergency Route.
9. Compile a list of family members' medications, as well as phone numbers for doctors, pharmacies and emergency rooms.
10. Know your neighbors, especially those who may need your assistance or who can assist **you** during or after a snow emergency.